

Inhabitants of London

And Westminster, and the Parts Adjacent may be furnish'd with

Coles, at 21 s. per Chaldron

In the Summer, and 25 s. per Chaldron in the Winter, and the Poor be supply'd at 21 s. per Chaldron, even in the hardest Weather.

IT is manifest for these two last Years Coles have born Excessive Price, the People generally having paid one third part more than in former Years, though there has been no hard Weather, which may be chiefly attributed to these Reasons.

1. The extraordinary Rates exacted by particular Seamen, who formerly serv'd for 33 s. per Voyage, and now will not serve under 7 or 8 l. 2. The Labourers (who by reason of their apprehension of being press'd on board the Ships at their Work) exacted greater Rates than usual. 3. The Lightermen exacted greater Rates, being under the same apprehensions, which occasion'd a great delay in delivering the Ships Lading. 4. The frequent Pressing the Seamen from on Board the Colliers, has not only often endangered the Ships, (there being scarce hands enough left to make good their Voyage, when at Sea) but has also made the procuring of Seamen very uncertain, even at those unreasonable Prices, and by such delays, the opportunity of winds were often lost. 5. The great price of Coles keeps all the Publick Stores empty, so that upon a contrary Wind, even in the Summer, the price has thereby been advanced 3 s. or 4 s. per Chaldron; whereas formerly the Store-Houses being full, such sudden Rise was prevented by making Sales from their Stores. 6. The fears of being taken by Privateers oblig'd them to stay for Convoys, whereas formerly when Laden, they took the advantage of the first fair wind; their staying till the whole Fleet was ready, made it both dilatory, and dangerous.

To Remove the aforesaid Grievances, and that the People may be supply'd with Coles at such Rates as are hereafter proposed, it is humbly offered as followeth.

1. That a competent number of Masters Trading to Newcastle, or whom else the Parliament shall think fit, be empowered to Press Men for that Service, and to oblige them to take the usual pay. 2. That a Protection be granted to a sufficient number of Labourers, which being protected, would willingly List themselves in Gangs, and be obliged to take the usual Rates; whereas of late, they have exacted 2 s. per score for each Man, and so upwards to 3 s. when formerly 18 s. a score was a good Rate. 3. That a Protection be also granted for a competent number of Lightermen, which would make them willing to serve at their former Rates. 4. That the Masters of Colliers at Newcastle shall not exceed the present Rates during the War. 5. That an establish'd Price be also set at the Pool, or Port of London, from 15 s. to 18 s. per Chaldron in the Summer Season, and from 17 s. to 20 s. in the Winter, and to be oblig'd to sell their usual Measure. 6. That there be every Winter a Bank of 30000 Chaldron of Coles stored by the Undertakers in several convenient places of the City, and adjacent Places, from whence the same may be supply'd, in case of contrary winds, or a hard Winter, which in time of Peace has raised Coles in the Summer season, from 21 s. to 30 s. per Chaldron, and in Winter, from 30 s. to 35 s. per Chaldron, and upwards. For contrary Winds and extreme Frosts will not in probability continue so long, but this quantity will be a competent supply. Besides, this Bank is a security to all others as well as the Poor: There shall be no gain made by these Coles, the Poor that fetch them, are always to be allow'd them at 7 d. a Bushell, which is the nearest penny, considering the charge of laying up, and the delivery of them, and no others are to be supply'd from this store but in case of contrary Winds and Frosts, the Town being for the most part sufficiently furnish'd in other Cases. 7. That the Masters of Collieries at Newcastle make the same allowance to the Ship Master as usual.

Now that the Owners and Masters of Ships may the better afford their Coles at the above Rates, as aforesaid, it is further proposed.

That an Impost or Duty of 10 s. per Chaldron London Measure, be laid at Newcastle upon all Coles Shipt there, for defraying all Losses of Ships taken by Privateers, Redemption of Seamen, Charge of Insuring half the value of Ship and Cargo in the Months of February, March, and October, and towards the Charge of Convoys, &c. which may be sufficient to answer all the ends aforesaid, and is very inconsiderable to the extravagant Rates now paid for Coles. Besides, the danger of Privateers is not so very considerable; for we cannot find by account, that there have been above 40 Sail of Colliers lost since this present War, which loss is computed to be about 20000 l. So that a great part of this Duty may be apply'd to the payment of Convoys.

That His Majesty be pleas'd to allow 4 small Fifth Rates to Cruise. One from Orfordness to Yarmouth Road, One from the Roads to the Spurn, One from the Spurn to Flamborough Head, and One from the Head to Yarmouth Bar, which will effectually secure the Coasts from Privateers.

The Quantity of Coles brought into the Port of London for these 4 years last past, viz. from Nov. 1688 to Nov. 1690, as appears by a Publick Account from the Office is 468031 Chaldron.

A Computation of what Seamen will be necessary for this Service.

The number of Ships employ'd in this Trade is about 400 Sail, of which there are about 300 on

which the fleet of the Trade depends, the rest being small Vessels is running in the Winter Season, their Cargo being so small that the Summer price of Coles will not defray their Charges; now the Winter price proposed is encouragement enough for them, and the great Ships customarily lying up in the Winter, their small Vessels will have a sufficient supply of Seamen.

Admit then, That 300 Vessels are sufficient (which is a moderate supposition) If His Majesty will please to grant a *Press* of 6 Seamen or 7 at most to each of the 300 Sail, to be divided proportionably to the Tonnage of each Ship, the full allowance of Men (with the Master and such married Seamen who have been lately very serviceable to them, together with the Ship Boys) will be a sufficient number to man them: Besides, if wanting, they may be supplied with Landmen, which in the main will be of Service in breeding of Seamen.

It may be Objected, *The present scarcity of Seamen will make it prejudicial for His*

Majesty to grant a Press for 1800 or 2000 men.

Answer. To contain that more than that number, on the least noise of a *Press*, hide themselves, and most of them with the knowledge of the Ship Masters; and when the heat of a *Press* is a little over, they get into the service of the said Colliers; and by the extravagant rates they extort from the Ship Masters, they now get as much in 2 Voyages as formerly in 4; but if they were compell'd to serve at the usual rate of 3 s. a Voyage, there will be no oblooding; and consequently the King not so much deceived in his *Press*. Besides, if the King should have an occasion for 1000 of these Men upon any sudden Emergency, The several Masters, &c. to have Power to *Press* as many *Watermen, Surgeons, and Cooks* that work on board a Ship the hardship of which cannot be great, for all Married Men and Old Men, that in the strictest *Presses* are never taken up for Their Majesties Service, will be content to go to Sea 1 or 2 Months in the mid of Summer, when they run no hazard. As to the *Cole Merchants*, who are between 2 and 3000; at the same time they are wanted at this Service, can't have any employment at home.

For the effectual carrying on this Undertaking, and for the preventing all Abuses therein, it is further proposed.

That every Master of a Vessel that expects the Benefit of this *Press*, do by the first day of January next, give in an account to the Undertakers, or their Agents, of the Tonnage of his Vessel, that a Warrant may be granted to *Press* his Complement of Men, and in case he be not ready to be loaded at Newcastle by the first of March (unless hindered by accident of Wind or Weather) to lose the benefit for such Warrant in the Summer; and in case any Ship-Master do *Press* more than his Complement of Men, or make a Voyage contrary to the design of this Undertaking; the Master to suffer 6 Months Imprisonment in the one case, and the Ship to be likewise forfeited in the other; and that the Masters, &c. may not abuse their Warrant, to the Oppression of their Majesties Subjects, by taking of Money, &c. That two Justices of the Peace may have Power to determine all Disputes arising on the Execution of this Act, and in case of any Misdemeanor by Master, Seaman, or Undertaker, or their Agents, the said Justices to have Power to Fine, not exceeding — but with liberty of appealing from thence to the Sessions.

It is also Objected, That the Rates of 21 s. and 25 s. in Winter, are greater than has been formerly paid.
Answer. If the Wood-mongers be oblig'd to sell full Measure, which 'tis well known scarce any of them have done, it will equal the said prices to 20 s. and 24 s. per Chaldron and under 2 and those are the lowest Rates that have been known for good Coles.

To oblige the Wood-mongers to sell full Measure, it is proposed.

That they measure by the Bushel at the Wharfe, and carry a Bushel in each Cart, if any Customer suspects the Sacks not to be measure, that he send for the Constable of the Parish to see the Coles fairly measured, and if in the Load there be wanting above a Peck, the Wood-monger to forfeit 5 l. to be distributed amongst Sea-Mens Widows of the Cole-Trade.

In short, the advantages of this undertaking are.

1st. By these Means there will be more Seamen employed than ever, it being no longer worth their while to hide, for those must starve that will not either serve the King, or this Undertaking. 2^d. The Masters of Colliers at Newcastle will receive an apparent benefit in the great increase of their rent computed to be above one Third part, for Coles being cheaper, the People will burn so much the more. 3^d. The Masters and Owners of Ships will have an advantage in the number, dispatch, and security of their Voyages. 4th. The Wood-mongers will have no just reason to complain of their being oblig'd to sell Measure. 5th. The benefit of the Poor is such, that it may keep Thousands almost from starving, and the middle sort of Trading People will be much the better enabled to pay their Taxes.

On the other side, the Persons that made the greatest advantage of the former Rates were the skulking Seamen, who made their own Terms with the Masters, and they too never the Richer for it; for by hiding three parts in five of their time, they idly spend their profit.

This further Consideration is offered to induce the Parliament to all the Expedition the nature of the Thing will admit of. That if a great Frost should happen this Winter, Coles will be at 4 l. per Chaldron, the City being almost without stores, and so consequently the Poor must be starv'd: If contrary Winds should happen in the Spring, Coles must of necessity be at 4 l. per Chaldron; and if this method be not followed, let the favourable Weather that can be hoped for happen in the Spring, Coles must of necessity be at 20 s. a Chaldron for the Private as well as Publick Stores will unavoidably be unfurnished at that time. Now settling the price for Coles so early, will be a means to keep down the price this Winter, for every one will empty the Stores they have left, by reason of the price falling in the Spring.

Now, That the Duty of 10 d. per Chaldron may be reasonably supposed to defray the Charge of securing Ships against Privateers, Insurance, Building of Ware-houses for Winter stores, and Ground Rent for the same, and also for the Interest of the 30000 l. for the Bank of Coles; yet in case it should not, the Arrears of the Account to be paid by an Additional Duty the succeeding Year; so on the contrary, the remainder to be appropriated to the charge of Convoys as before expressed.

And for encouragement of the Undertakers, Inducers, they upon these following Considerations, desire 2 d. per Chaldron for themselves, and to defray the following Charges, viz.

1st. They must have Agents at Newcastle, &c. to examine into the Tonnage and number of Seamen required for each Vessel. 2^d. To give an Account of Skulking Seamen. 3^d. To take the several values of Ships and Cargo in case they be taken by Privateers, that they may not present such losses to be greater than they are. 4th. To take care of the Insurance of those Ships that detain in the Month aforesaid, provided the Owners are willing to insure one half at the same time. 5th. To take care in the Buying and Managing the storing and delivery of 30000 Chaldrons of Coles. 6th. The Collecting Raising and Paying the 10 d. per Chaldron, as aforesaid.

Now, That no other advantage can be made of the 30000 l. but in the storing of Coles, for in the Summer they must be bought up, and in the Winter the Store Houses are full; they likewise make hazard of casual Fires, and of the Coles heaving and sinking as they lie, and other accidents which may happen in the several Ware-Houses.

And the Undertakers are willing to give what Security shall be thought convenient for the Performance on their Parts.

FINIS.